
ONSTAGE

IN NEW JERSEY

presents

THE MUSIC OF GEORGE WALKER

SUNDAY
JUNE 9, 1991
3:00 P.M.

THE NEWARK MUSEUM
Billy Johnson Auditorium
49 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey



George Walker is a composer and pianist who resides in Montclair, New Jersey. He is a Fulbright fellow who received extensive training in the U.S. and in Europe. His classical works have delighted audiences around the world through performances by such major orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, The Boston Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra.

His piece titled "Lyric For Strings," was written in 1946, and was recently played live on the Arts & Entertainment Channel from the Academy of Music with Conductor Ricardo Muti. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra also performed his works this January.

Many compositions in Walker's vast repertoire have been commissioned by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Eastman School of Music and numerous foundations. The London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and CBS Records, among others, have recorded his compositions.

THE PROGRAM

String Quartet, no.1 (1946)

Allegro

Molto adagio

Allegro con fuoco

Performed by The Chaminade String Quartet

Marianne Henry, 1st violin

Diedra Lawrence, viola

Marisa McLeod, 2nd violin

Michael Cameron, cello

Songs for Voice and Piano (text by Emily Dickinson) (1983)

Wild Nights

What If I Say I Shall Not Wait

I Have No Life But This

Bequest

Renay Farrar, soprano

Colette Valentine, piano

Sonata no. 2 for Piano (1957)

Adagio non troppo

Presto

Adagio

Allegretto tranquillo

Frances Walker, pianist

INTERMISSION

Sonata no. 2 for Violin and Piano (1979)

I. $\text{♩} = 60$

II. $\text{♩} = 69$

III. $\text{♩} = 50$

Cyrus Stevens, Violin

Colette Valentine, Piano

Songs for Voice and Piano

Sweet, Let Me Go (text anonymous) (1954)

Nocturne (Donald S. Hayes) (1983)

I Went To Heaven (Emily Dickinson) (1953)

Renay Farrar, soprano

Colette Valentine, piano

Sonata no.1 for Piano (1953)

Allegro energico

Moderato (Theme and six variations)

Allegro con brio

Frances Walker, pianist

Remarks

George Walker

Acknowledgments

THE PERFORMERS

THE CHAMINADE STRING QUARTET were recently awarded the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Competition prize from the Eastman School of Music/University of Rochester. As winners, they will receive a two year tuition waiver at the university, a stipend, private coachings and lessons with members of the Cleveland Quartet. The Chaminade String Quartet has performed extensively in New York. For two consecutive summers they attended the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France.

RENAY FARRAR, soprano, has a voice with crystal clear pitch. She has performed operatic classics by Mozart and Verdi, with the same ease as her back-up vocal work for the popular group "New Kids on the Block," and jingle singer for an AT&T commercial. She was the vocalist of choice, to perform for such luminaries as the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and New York City Mayor David Dinkins.

CYRUS STEVENS, violinist, is a graduate of the Hartt School of Music, and the New England Conservatory. He has been a member of the faculty at Hartt and is currently a member of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. His work has been recorded by CRI, and New World Records. Mr. Stevens spent ten years on the performing staff of the Composers' Conference and Chamber Music Center, now at Wellesley College. He has appeared with the Berg Violin Concerto in the New York City Ballet's production of "In Memory of..."

COLETTE VALENTINE, pianist, was a prize-winner in the Gina Bachauer and the University of Maryland International Piano Competitions. She has performed solo and in chamber concerts throughout the U.S., Japan, Hong Kong, and Macao. This season Ms. Valentine will appear at Carnegie Hall in New York, Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Suntory Hall in Tokyo. She has recorded with violinist Junko Ohtsu, with flutist Harold Jones, and with her ensemble, the Ecco Trio.

FRANCES WALKER, pianist, has played in some of the most coveted performance venues, including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, The National Gallery, and the Corcoran and Phillips Galleries in Washington, DC. Ms. Walker began playing piano at 4 years old. After extensive music studies she embarked on a musical career that has taken her to Europe, the West Indies, and across the U.S. Her tours have received sponsorship from USIS, Pepsi and Toyota. She is a recording artist for Orion Records.

PROGRAM NOTES BY GEORGE WALKER

My String Quartet no. 1 was composed in 1946 after my graduation from the Curtis Institute of Music and my debut recital as a pianist in Town Hall, New York and as a soloist with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in the 3rd Piano Concerto of Rachmaninoff at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. The first movement presents strongly contrasting themes in a clearly defined sonata form. The second movement, after an introduction that recurs at the very end, alternates linear melodic phrases, imitated in all parts, with measures of repose. This movement was excised from its original context, arranged for string orchestra and titled, *Lyric for Strings*. It has been performed in this setting by many of the major orchestras and chamber ensembles in this country. The third movement is a large-scaled rondo with two recurrences of the principal section. The reflective coda, or closing section, presents a transformation of the initial thematic material in augmentation. This performance marks the first presentation of the newly revised version of this work.

The four songs, with texts by Emily Dickinson, were composed with the Nocturne, by Donald S. Hayes, on a commission from Fisk University in 1983. Donald S. Hayes is a black poet who lives in North Carolina. The fifth text by Emily Dickinson, "I Went To Heaven", was set much earlier in 1953. "Sweet, Let Me Go" and "The Bereaved Maid" manifest the independence of the piano accompaniment that characterize the later songs.

My four sonatas for piano offer contrast in formal construction and in harmonic and contrapuntal content. The formal aspects of the Sonata no. 1 for Piano are closer to the construction of the String Quartet no. 1 than is apparent from the dates of composition. This relationship is pertinent only to the broader outlines of the movements. The first movement of the Piano Sonata, no. 1 is a classical sonata form, but the harmonic content is based on fourths. The second movement is a set of six variations on a Kentucky folk song, "O Bury Me Beneath The Willow". The third movement alternates theme and accompaniment, (invertible counterpoint), in an arch-like form* (A-B-C-B-C-A). A second folk song, "Liza", is utilized as the "B" section of this movement.

The Sonata no. 2 for Piano compresses certain baroque and classical techniques into a smaller frame. The first movement of this work consists of a set of ten short variations based upon a ground, a short ostinato, that is derived from the theme itself. The second movement has a brief introduction that is incorporated in a short scherzo-like section. A contrasting section leads to the return of the first section to create a three part form.

PROGRAM NOTES BY GEORGE WALKER—CONTINUED

The third movement is essentially monothematic. Its intensity is achieved through the additive nature of the scale-like embellishments and to the increased sonorities in the middle of the movement. The fourth movement moves from tranquility to agitation in the three large sections that are repeated without development in a pre-determined sonatina form. The closing material suggests the appearance of thematic fragments from the first movement. The texture of this work is determined by the consistent use of superstructures of thirds. The Piano Sonata no. 2 is dedicated to the memory of my father.

The Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 2 was commissioned by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the violinist, Sanford Allen. The independence of the piano part is more evident in the first two movements of this work. After the introduction of the 1st movement, the pontillistic irrelevance of the piano writing is juxtaposed with the soaring lines of the violin part. In the second movement, the ostinato of the violin is punctuated with violent interjections by the piano. In the third movement, there are interchanges of fragments between the two instruments. The communion spiritual, "Let Us Break Bread Together", is presented in this manner to bring the movement to a close. Its appearance, however, is not obvious because of the rhythmic manipulation to which it has been subjected.

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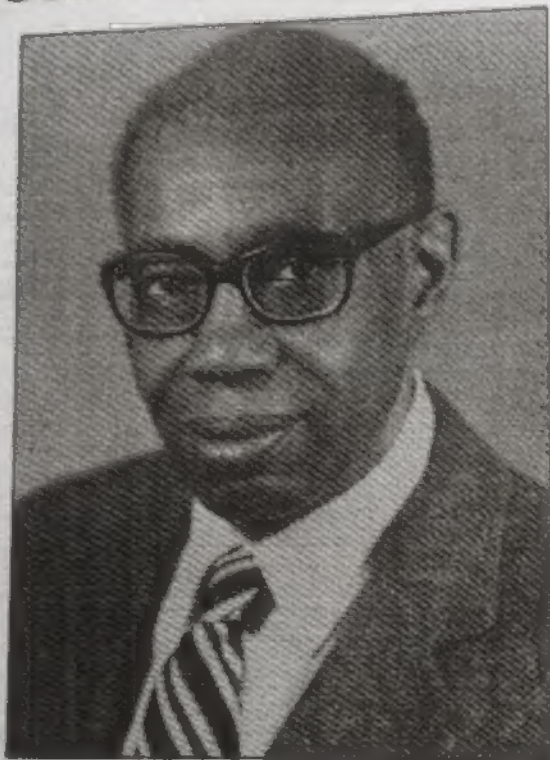
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The Carter G. Woodson' Foundation
presents
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featuring
Renay Farrar - Soprano
Cyrus Stevens - Violinist
Colette Valentine - Pianist
Francis Walker - Pianist
and
Chaminade String Quartet